



**Office of the Cook County Board President
Toni Preckwinkle**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 26, 2014

CONTACT

Frank Shuftan

(312) 603-3323-direct

(312) 343-6480-mobile

frank.shuftan@cookcountyil.gov

**President Preckwinkle Lauds Efforts of Cook County
Employees on National Rebuilding Day**

Dozens of workers help improve two homes in Riverdale

Dozens of Cook County employees volunteered today to help repair two homes in south suburban Riverdale as part of the annual National Rebuilding Day.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle toured the homes and congratulated the volunteers for their efforts as part of the County's 23rd consecutive year of participation in the event, also known as "Rebuilding Together."

The non-profit Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago annually partners with the County to improve the homes of elderly, disabled or low-income residents who are selected following a vetting process. The renovations take the selected homes and, through the work of volunteers and skilled tradesmen, make them safe, warm and dry, and improve accessibility for their residents.

"Rebuilding Together is a remarkable program whose mission and purpose I heartily support," said Preckwinkle, who serves as honorary chair of Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago. "I am moved that so many of our Cook County employees are willing to donate their time to improving the living situations of our fellow citizens."

The County contributed \$70,000 during the past year to Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago through its Community Development Block Grant program. This year the County is sponsoring

two of the 23 Riverdale homes being repaired today by volunteers from various organizations through the Rebuilding Together program. An additional 10 homes in Riverdale are receiving Energy Efficiency upgrades as part of the National Rebuilding Day efforts. Some 1,338 Chicago-area homes have been renovated through the program since its inception in 1991.

“The spirit I see here today is commendable, and the results of your hard work will be felt immediately in improved quality of life for the homeowners,” Preckwinkle told the volunteers on-site. “Cook County is proud to be part of Rebuilding Together as a way to assist those in need, and to contribute to the strength of our communities.”

Improvements to the homes included making them ADA accessible, replacing windows, painting, installing new flooring, disposing of debris, and performing needed repairs to vital systems such as plumbing and electrical.

In addition to the home repair project, staff from the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways and the Forest Preserves of Cook County improved streetscape and greenery along two blocks of South Lowe Avenue in Riverdale where County volunteers were repairing the homes.

“Cook County has been a consistent and valued partner throughout the years of Rebuilding Together,” said Wanda Ramirez, executive director of Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago. “We greatly appreciate the continuing participation of County employees who donate their time and energy for the benefit of others, and the leadership of President Toni Preckwinkle for serving as honorary chair of this annual event.”

Along with Cook County, this year’s sponsors of home repairs in Riverdale include Lend Lease Inc., Governors State University, C.J. Erickson Plumbing Company, American Institute of Architects, Loyola Stritch School of Medicine and several churches, among others. Labor unions that contributed to the success of the upgrades were International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 134, Chicago Journeymen Plumbers Local Union 130, Union Association Chicago and Northeast District Council of Carpenters, Labor Management Cooperating Committee/Chicago, and Painters and Tapers Local 147

Additional volunteer efforts at nearby Whistler Woods saw staffers from the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the County’s Department of Environmental Control participating in Cook County’s Annual Earth Day Parks and Preserves Cleanup, which included a cleanup of the woods, activities such as a nature hike, and textile and electronics recycling.

And Give Back Days, through which Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago matches volunteers with additional community development projects throughout the year, included contributions

from Northern Trust, George Sollitt Construction, Peoples Gas and the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

Additional information on Rebuilding Together of Metro Chicago and its programs is available by calling Wanda Ramirez at (312) 201-1188 or visiting www.rebuildingtogether-chi.com.

###